

# Concerning Times And Seasons

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If you are in your Bible and depending on your background, what you've been taught and how you see things, and that's okay, as long as they're not the major things. Okay, we're talking about minor things. So there are bound to be disagreements. Number two, if there are, what do we do? We do what the Bereans did.

Remember after they'd been Thessalonica, they went to Berea and it says they examine the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. They had been presented with something they had not heard before. And instead of saying, you're crazy, Paul, they looked at the Scriptures. And so our final authority is always the word of God. Okay?

Now we may not see it the same, but it has to be our final authority. We need to examine it carefully to determine our doctrines and views. And third, if we still disagree, and again on minor doctrines, we agree to disagree. That's simple, isn't it? Okay.

That's how we should approach some of the teachings that we're seeing that people are teaching in the Scriptures. And if we did that, guess what? We'd all get along really well, wouldn't we? There wouldn't be the divisions, the schisms and all those things that you're seeing in the church. So with those guidelines in place, I want to take a minute today, maybe a few minutes to look at the day of Christ and the day of the Lord.

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You may not have heard this or not, but many believe that these are different days, dispensational teaching treatsises as different ways. They teach that the day of Christ is the rapture. Jesus comes partway to the earth and he raptures the Christians out of the world. That begins the seven year tribulation where God is pouring out in his wrath on those who had rejected Christ. And then at the end of that seven years is the day of Christ when Jesus comes back to judge the world.

And that's something that most of us have been taught and many still believe. That was first preached in 1830 at the Powers Court Conference in England by a man named J.N. darby. And he's the one that introduced dispensational teaching. Most of that is not popular today.

But that view is probably the main view in evangelical Christianity today. And that's fine if someone believes that. But I don't. I have a different belief, another view. And before I present it, I want to challenge you.

When someone presents something different, a different doctrine. I'm not talking about the major doctrines, but some of these minor doctrines and issues that divide Christians that really aren't the main thing. We should at least be open to hearing what they have to say, what are they teaching and what's the background in the Scripture for that. The other view is what's called the Reform view. It was held by Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Wesley brothers, the Puritans, and virtually every other Christian before J.N.

darby introduced the dispensational teaching in 1830. And when I actually studied the Scriptures about the end times, it became my view that the day of Christ and the day of the Lord are the same day that Jesus comes back, one time, not two. And I'm going to give several reasons why I believe that. Reason number one, and in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, which is a pretty well accepted encyclopedia on Christian doctrine, it states that the day of the Lord in the New Testament is imminently the day of Christ, the day of his coming in the glory of Father. And it explains that.

On the one hand, it is a day of rejoicing for Christians and it is the day of Christ in that sense. On the other hand, it is a day of fear and trembling for those who do not know Christ because it is the day of the Lord, which is a day of judgment. The same day brings rejoicing to the Christian and brings terror to those who are not Christians. And one day, two different outcomes. Reason number two is the way chapter five begins.

Let's look at verse one. Chapter five, verse one. And so Paul, he had been talking about the Rapture in chapter four, and we agree on the Rapture. And whatever you view on this, they all agree on the Rapture. Now, concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anyone written to you concerning the times and the seasons.

Now, concerning. When someone says now concerning or now about this, they are either introducing a new topic, which he could be doing, or they are explaining something that has already been said. I believe that he's explaining something that has already been said and he's not introducing a new topic. If Paul wanted to introduce a new topic, the day of the Lord, which comes at the end of the tribulation, he would have said, now concerning the day of the Lord. He doesn't do that because all he's doing here is anticipating the fact that you and I, the disciples, almost everyone, their first question is, when?

Right, When's this going to happen? And Christians, since Christ has been resurrected, have been looking for that day of the Lord. They expected it to be in their lifetime and they want to know about that. And he's saying hey, you can't know about it, okay? Not even the angels know about that day or time.

He's just explaining the question, the natural question that they would have about the times and the seasons. No reason to believe that Paul suddenly changes days when he mentions the day of the Lord in verse two. Then a third reason in verse two to four. There it says, for you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying there's peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. And that day will be sudden. It will be unannounced. People will not know that it was coming that day. They come like a thief that breaks into the house.

They don't send you an announcement. I'll be there at 2 in the morning. Make sure you're in bed and asleep, because I'm going to steal everything you have. They don't do it that way, do they? They come at a time that you least expect them.

But he's saying here that the Christian brothers are not in darkness and they should not be surprised like a thief. If the Christians had been raptured out of the world at the beginning of the tribulation and this day of the Lord happens at the end of the tribulation, there'd be no reason to write that to them. They wouldn't be here. There would be no concern on their part. And so that leads to reason number four, which is Paul.

He uses this passage to contrast believers and unbelievers. On the one hand, he has the children of the light Christians. On the other hand, he has the children of the darkness, unbelievers. Jesus said he was the light of the world and he came in to give us the light of God. But when he comes into our life, we have that light.

We see things that we didn't see before. I imagine if we had time for testimonies, that many of you would say that, oh, I would read the Scriptures, and I didn't see it. It just wasn't there for me. And then when you became a believer, it's all a sudden like, wow, I see it. Where'd that come from?

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Jesus said he was the light of the world, and we put our faith in Christ to save us. He lights up our lives, helping us see things that we couldn't see when we were in the darkness. Of the world. That means that you and I, as Christians, we should be seeing things that are happening around us that make us aware that Christ could come back at any time.

And Jesus mentioned several things in Matthew 24. Wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, those kind of things. Those are reminders that God will keep his promise. Jesus Christ will come back to not only rescue his followers, but to bring judgment on

those who are not him. Paul tells us in verse four, but you're not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief in. Essentially, what he's saying is, if you are a believer, if you're walking in the light, you should be ready for the return of Christ.

That's the whole purpose of him writing this, that we will be ready. Verse 8 tells us, but since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. You and I are looking forward to the return of Christ. The unbeliever, on the other hand, that says they're looking for peace and security. Somehow we got to fix this stuff and get rid of wars and get rid of famine and get rid of all these natural disasters.

And that's what they're looking for. And they're going to be surprised when Christ comes back because they're in the darkness. And it says suddenly sudden destruction will come upon them and labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. Paul shares the reason for this over in Second Corinthians 4, 4, referring to those in the darkness. He says, in their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel, of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

And the fact is, when Christ comes into a life, we see the glory of the gospel. That God Almighty was willing to come into the world, take on a body, die for sinners, so that we could come to God. He gets all the glory, and we see that and we give him glory. There's a fifth reason that I believe these two days are one day is because of the encouragement at the end of both of these passages. And we looked at this a few weeks ago, the end of chapter four says, therefore the fact that Christ is coming back, therefore encourage one another with these words.

And then in verse 11, referring to the day of the Lord, therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you're doing. Jesus Christ is coming back together, his children, followers of Christ, to himself, where we will experience joy, peace, love, unimaginable glory forever and ever. But also he's coming to bring judgment on those who have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and as Lord. And all that's left is a day of wrath for them. And so the whole purpose of Paul sharing this, which he

shares, what Christ said in chapter 24 of Matthew, the whole purpose is to get you and I to be ready to live in a way that when he comes, we won't be ashamed.

We'll be ready to come into his presence. And Jesus taught on this in Matthew 24, we won't go through that. But immediately in chapter 25, he shares three parables. And the purpose of each one of those parables is to tell us, you have to be ready. And three ways that we can be ready.

The first were the 10 virgins. Remember them? What do we know about the 10 virgins? Five had oil in their lamp, right? The bridegroom came.

Christ, they went out to meet him. They came back and went into the wedding chambers. Five did not have oil in their lamp. And they rushed around trying to get oil, but it was too late. They were locked out in the outer darkness.

And the point there is, if you're going to be ready, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You need to be seeking God. You need to be allowing him to work in your life and changing you. The second parable was about three servants. Remember, the master was going to go on a long journey, and so he gave his servants some talents.

10 talents, 5 talents, 1 talents according to their ability, and no shame in that. 10, 5, 1 according to their ability. He knows our ability. After a long time, the master came back and they had to give an account. And of course, the guy with 10 or 5, I don't remember which, it was said, look, master, I got 10 more.

And of course, what was his response? Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into your master's happiness. Same thing with the second one. But the third one buried the talent.

He was afraid. As a result of that, he was rejected and thrown out of the outer darkness. And the point of that parable, as far as being ready, we need to be investing in the kingdom of Christ in some way that needs to be the focus of our lives, that we are here to glorify him with our lives in some way. And there's risk involved in that. It's not guaranteed.

But we step out in faith, believing that God will use us, whatever talent he's given us for his glory. And well done, good and faithful servant.

The third parable is about the sheep and the goats. And dispensationalists say that that's about the countries that supported Israel and didn't say that. That's not what it says. Christ said, enter into your kingdom. Those on the right, the sheep.

And they go, why? And he says, because when I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was in prison, you came to visit me. On the other hand, the goats, they were shut out of the kingdom.

And they go, why? Because when I was all of those things, you didn't do those things. And they said, well, when did we see you that? And of course, he said, when you saw the least of these and did it to them. And so, number one, we need to be filled with the Spirit.

Number two, we need to be investing in the kingdom. Number three, we need to be doing the work of God, which is caring for others and reaching out wherever we can and whatever way to do that. And I believe that's what it means to be ready, that we won't be found goofing off, okay? We'll be actually doing the work that God gave us to do. Now, you may wonder, why is this important?

Who cares what day it is? By the way? It's referred to as the day of the Lord. It's referred to as the day of Christ. Twice in one in Philippians chapter one, clearly referring to the Rapture.

It's referred to as that day and the day, and sometimes just day, okay? All pointing to the fact that Jesus Christ is coming again. On the one hand, to rescue his children, on the other hand, to judge those who rejected him. So why is it important which day it is? And here's the reason.

I believe if you miss that day, and many will, it says, if you miss that day, then you're destined to experience the wrath of God. Look at verse 9. For God has not destined us for wrath. And by the way, Christians will never experience the wrath of God. Will

experience the discipline of God, will even experience tribulation, but never the wrath of God.

He does not pour out his wrath on his children, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, as Jesus was talking about this to his disciples in Matthew 24, he says, many will fall away, many will be led astray. The love of many will go cold on account of the great tribulation that will come upon the world. On account of the great tribulation that will come upon the world. It was interesting.

Jason was sharing this with his stepfather and he showed him the scriptures and he convinced him that that day of Christ, the day of the Lord, same day Christ coming back to rescue to judge. And his stepfather believed that.

I see it, I see it in the scriptures. Well, he came back, I don't know if it's months or years later and they were talking about, I don't believe that anymore. And Jason said, why not? I just don't believe it anymore. Why not?

Because I don't want my children to go through suffering.

And of course who would want anyone to go through suffering? No one would. Who would want to go through the great tribulation? No one would. And yet Jesus said, we will now dispensations get around that.

And they say, oh, Matthew 24 isn't written to Christians, that's written to Jews. And of course, where do you get that? The whole Bible is written to us. We talked about Jews in Sunday school. A real Jew is someone that's put their faith in Christ, children of God, children after Abraham.

But the point being is if there's going to be this great deception, one of the things that you want to do is convince someone you don't have to worry about it, you won't be here. Yeah, don't worry, you're okay. And so if it's not a real faith in Christ, and I believe every real believer will be ready, okay, whether you believe this day or that day, that's not the issue. But to be prepared, forewarned is to be prepared. I know I may suffer for Christ the persecution, the that is from the devil.



That's where the tribulation comes from. Not through Christ. We will not suffer the wrath of Christ. We will be taken out before he pours out his wrath on the end times population of this world that is saying peace and security, not realizing the only peace that anyone can ever have is peace through Jesus Christ. And so whatever you believe about this day, if you as a believer are ready, you can be sure.

And to me this is the most important thing in all of life, that you will not experience the wrath of God. There's a song and I can't sing it. I wish we'd all been ready, right? And that is the goal of this teaching, that would be ready for the return of Christ. Not knowing whether I would live or die with this heart condition and I questioned at times which it would be.

I thought, well, this is my last Thanksgiving, possibly Lord willing it won't be. And we had over 30 different family members and friends there. And I thought, I don't care what they think I'm going to share the gospel with them. All right? And so I got up and I shared a little bit of my testimony and the love of God for us and the fact that I had peace no matter what happens, whether I see the Lord now or when he comes back later, that I was trusting in God to accomplish his will for my life.

And at the end, some of the people, which was kind of a strange reaction, I thought. But it hit me. The ones who didn't know Christ were thinking, you know, if it works for you, that's fine. If it works for you, that's fine. But they were not experiencing.

I don't believe. I pray that they do. The warning that God gives us that Christ is coming back and the reason that it didn't bother him, and I've seen this more and more, no fear of God. It'll all turn out. It's fine for you.

I think I'm fine, too. But the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. And when he comes back, you will either be with him in heaven for eternity or you'll be without him in hell for eternity. And that's why it's so important that we believe in the coming of Jesus Christ and we prepare ourselves for it. Let's pray.

Father, I believe your word. Jesus said he is coming again.

And if he doesn't come, it means that you're a liar, and I know you're not. He will come. It'll come at a time when we least expect it. The world will be caught off guard, saying peace and security, not knowing that only Christ offers that. But God, as your people, we believe that you are preparing us to spend eternity with you.

And we have a responsibility to be ready to be filled with the spirit, to be investing in the kingdom, be doing the work of Christ and people's lives. And so I pray for each one of us. Father, we're busy and we got things to do and responsibilities. And those are good, those are right. But at the same time, help us to keep our eyes on the coming of Christ, that we would be ready in Christ's name, Amen.